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DEVELOPMENT OF READING AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE MATERIALS FOR GRADES 7-9 IN DEPRESSED URBAN AREAS.

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ENGLISH CURRICULUM MATERIALS (GATEWAY ENGLISH) DEVELOPED FOR USE WITH SEVENTH-GRADE DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS WERE INFORMALLY EVALUATED. THE EXPERIMENTAL MATERIALS INCLUDED (1) TEACHING MANUALS, (2) DAILY LESSON PLANS, AND (3) PROJECT ENGLISH MATERIALS SELECTED TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT OF SPEAKING, LISTENING, AND VIEWING HABITS. MATERIALS WERE DESIGNED FOR USE WITH STUDENTS WHO AVERAGED 1 TO 1 1/2 YEARS BELOW NATIONAL OR REGIONAL ENGLISH AND READING NORMS. THE MATERIALS WERE USED BY TEACHERS IN 12 NEW YORK CITY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS WHICH SERVICED THE DISADVANTAGED. REACTIONS TO THE MATERIALS WERE SOLICITED FROM PARENTS, TEACHERS, PUPILS, AND LANGUAGE ARTS CONSULTANTS. PUPIL REACTIONS WERE ALSO OBSERVED. PARENT REACTIONS WERE TOO FRAGMENTARY TO PERMIT FIRM CONCLUSIONS. GENERALLY FAVORABLE REACTIONS WERE EXPRESSED BY THE TEACHERS OF THE DISADVANTAGED PUPILS AND THE STUDENTS IN THE CLASSES. HUMAN RELATIONS THEMES INTRODUCED BY THE MATERIALS WERE OBSERVED TO BE USEFUL FOR IMPROVING CLASSROOM INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR. FINDINGS WERE USED TO DETERMINE REQUIREMENTS FOR REVISION AND SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT OF EIGHTH- AND NINTH-GRADE MATERIALS. (WN)

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GATEWAY ENGLISH

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SUMMARY REPORT OF A PILOT YEAR FOR GATEWAY ENGLISH

(7th Grade)

October, 1965

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PROJECT ENGLISH CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

Hunter College of the City University of New York

695 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10021

Marjorie B. Smiley
Project Director

SUMMARY REPORT OF A PILOT YEAR FOR GATEWAY ENGLISH

(7th Grade)

This report summarizes the results of a full try-out year of the completed seventh-grade Gateway English curriculum.

Development of the actual curriculum was preceded by a careful and deliberate process of working out the approach, the style, and the orientation which would characterize all three years of the junior high school course of study, in keeping with the aims and point of view expressed in the original proposal. Once that major task was accomplished, all available resources were mobilized toward the organization of anthologies, design of detailed lesson plans, production of teacher manuals, compilation of appropriate supplementary materials, the shaping of these components into a workable course of study, and finally, the practical try-out of the program in a "real life" school situation.

Large-scale formal evaluation was not a part of the original plan. However, initial planning did include a modest formal evaluation procedure, involving the selection of appropriately comparable "control" classes and the periodic assessment and comparison of language arts progress as between experimental and control classes. A design was mapped out, a set of conditions concerning the composition of the participating classes was agreed upon, control schools were painstakingly located and their cooperation secured, and tests were selected. However, the obstacles encountered in maintaining even the most flexible standards of experimental design "clean-ness" have proven to be insurmountable after all. The New York City public school system is a very large and complex one; under normal

conditions, it is extremely difficult to carry out systematic research within the framework of its administrative structure and in the context of its regular functioning. Currently it is undergoing major changes in administrative organization, zoning procedures, and the like. Project English has no influence or control over the organization of classes, the assignment of teachers, or the planning of schedules and academic programs. It has proven to be impossible to carry out even a very simple and modest design which would make direct comparisons between experimental and control classes meaningful and valid.[1]

Fortunately, the aims of Project English have not been restricted to those which require formal evaluation procedures and techniques. The specific goal of improving the reading and reading-allied skills of a special population of junior high school pupils is, of course, high on the list of stated objectives. Quantitative assessment of relative gains in reading speed and comprehension, in appreciation of "correct" grammar and written form, in vocabulary knowledge, etc., was the purpose of the formal evaluation plan mentioned above. (The projected test battery included selected portions of the new Stanford Achievement Test battery; a listening comprehension test developed by Project English, utilizing passages adapted from an alternate form of the achievement test battery; and written compositions obtained under standardized conditions.)[2] However, equally at issue are other questions, either explicitly asked in the original proposal or implicit in the very nature of the effort. Answers to these questions can best be

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[1]See the attached memorandum in letter form detailing these difficulties.

[2]See specimen copies of the Composition stimulus-picture form and of the listening comprehension test, appended.

looked for in the judgments of the teachers using the materials, in the recorded reactions of participating pupils, and in the reactions to the program of language arts experts.

To begin with, the materials for Project English are especially selected and prepared to permit exploitation and building on the speaking, listening, and viewing habits of the pupils for whom they are intended. (These pupils comprise that large group of disadvantaged junior high school children of presumed "average" academic capability, whose reading and reading-related competencies, though below standard, are not so retarded as to require-or render them eligible for-placement in remedial classes. More specifically, the experimental seventh-grade curriculum was designed for classes of seventh-grade English students whose reading skills, at the beginning of the program were, on the average, about one to one-and-one-half years below the national or regional norms, according to standardized tests. As will be noted again below, the try-out groups actually represented a much wider range of pre-program competency than was intended, owing to the fact that Project English was restricted to the use of intact groups and that the selection of the participating classes was made by the school administration, not by Project staff.)

The materials are related to the reality situations in which disadvantaged urban children live and to their present needs and goals, in order to bridge the gap between their experiences and those that are the subject of much of the literature acceptable to more advantaged middle-class children. No restriction was placed on the sources of these materials, and in fact, the anthologies represent a most unusual collection of

selections from folk literature, modern novels, newspaper stories, popular verse, etc., etc. Manifestly, none of this material is conveniently pre-graded or pre-tested. It is pertinent, therefore, to ask whether participating teachers have found them appropriate with respect to difficulty level, readability, interest value for the students, and suitability as vehicles for further growth of verbal fluency, effectiveness of expression, and other achievements generally held as goals for junior high school English programs.

A second important concern is the evaluation of the teacher guides and manuals and of the supplementary reading lists. Project English staff have hoped to help clarify a problem that has long been the subject of controversy in education--the question of whether detailed directions, lesson plans, and the like are justified and even necessary for the successful launching of an inexperienced teacher or to avoid disaster for any teacher suddenly projected into a socio-educational milieu for which he was unprepared, or whether such aids to the instructor encourage dependency and a pedestrian approach to curriculum.

A third question raised by Project English has to do with the "thematic unit" approach to curriculum development, and particularly, with the nature of the themes selected. All but two of the instructional units developed for the seventh grade centered upon a core of human relations values, and the two exceptions, both poetry units, contain many selections with clearly ethnic or sub-cultural relevance. These themes were carefully selected on the basis of a general knowledge of the developmental needs and common concerns of adolescents, but

more importantly, on accumulating information concerning the specific needs of under-privileged urban adolescents. The lessons involve direct confrontation of such questions as family relationships, vocational opportunity, and methods of coping with life-adjustment problems, with special reference to the implications of minority-group status. Accordingly, questions arise as to the effectiveness of the program in promoting pupil consideration of these values, and, indeed, of the very advisability of dealing with such problems in this manner. It should be emphasized that the lessons are designed to focus on the issue and not on the personal involvements of individual students with these concerns. Nonetheless, these issues do "hit them where they live," have personal implications, are emotionally loaded, and are frequently controversial. It can be argued that not all language arts teachers are adequately trained or temperamentally suited to lead such discussions--that they might better be handled by someone whose background has better prepared him for a "guidance" function. Some might feel that regardless of the individual teacher's competency, such discussions are inappropriate for an "English class." And certainly, irrespective of the individual teacher's adequacy to the task and of the essential appropriateness or inappropriateness of such activities in the language arts class setting, some teachers can be expected to feel considerable anxiety about engaging in candid discussions with minority or socially disadvantaged groups about such potentially explosive matters.

Another question concerns a fundamental assumption implicit in the expressed aims and approach of the project as a whole and of the seventh-grade curriculum in particular. It

involves the expectation that skills will be learned as a by-product of reading and discussing. That is, with enhanced motivation, pupils will read more, and from their reading they will acquire a sense of correct grammar and good usage, without necessarily learning the rules. Moreover, being strongly motivated, the classes will engage in a good deal of language activity--mostly oral but considerable written composition as well--and with all this language activity, they will develop a "feel" for English as it is intended to be, a language for communicating. In effect, it means taking a "calculated risk," with respect to one of the most basic and commonly agreed upon goals for junior high school language arts curricula, and it demands a high degree of adaptability and readiness to try something new, on the part of the teacher. Actually, this is an overstatement. The seventh-grade program places a major emphasis on critical reading, on using carefully chosen reading selections as a stimulus for analysis of manifest and implied meanings, and as a starting point for discussion, and it de-emphasizes formal instruction and drill. However, this approach, in turn, is designed not as an end in itself, but as a more effective way of "opening up" into the tasks of the eighth and ninth grade curricula, which do include more direct teaching of grammar, preferred usage, etc. Nonetheless, an important departure from regular procedure is involved.

The seventh-grade curriculum has been piloted in some twelve classes, involving six teachers, in three N.Y.C. junior high schools. The teachers' reactions have been solicited and recorded in detail. Frequent observations of Project-English-in-action have been made by Project staff and by interested

others. Copies of complete instructional units have been shown to language arts consultants for criticism. Pupil reactions have been observed and recorded.

In general, the findings have been judged to be overwhelmingly favorable. This is not to suggest that the program has been an unqualified success, that it gives evidence of being the solution to language arts deficiency problems characteristic of urban slum children. Certainly, not all students were "reached." Moreover, many purely practical or operational difficulties were discovered and have had to be remedied. However, a great deal of affirmative support appears to have been given to the Gateway English approach in the context of the questions raised above.

If the program's success were to be judged entirely on the basis of commendations offered by visitors, by administrators, and by various professionsls who have either examined the instructional units or who have attended demonstrations given, upon invitation, by members of Gateway staff, this report would be superfluous. The Project offices have been deluged with requests for sample copies and with invitations to the staff to make presentations of the curriculum to graduate student groups, teachers, and other organizations. The Project's director has a continually expanding file of correspondence with urban school systems in various parts of the country asking outright for permission to adopt the programs in their junior high schools.

To consider first the "workability" of the materials. The teachers are unanimous in their finding that the Project staff were more successful than they could reasonably have

expected to be in selecting materials that were suitable, in terms of readability, interest level, and difficulty level for the pupils for whom they were selected. This is a particularly significant finding in view of the circumstance noted above, that the curriculum was used with classes showing a wide range of pre-experimental language competency. Median grade-equivalent scores for the twelve participating classes, on a comprehensive reading test administered in the preceding (sixth grade) year ranged from 4.3 to 7.4. Yet, at no time was a question even raised as to the necessity or desirability of revising the program "upward" or "downward" in accordance with the particular level of talent of different classes. Clearly, the program is inherently flexible enough to permit such adaptations within its own framework, without doing violence to the course of study as planned. Moreover, in neither the co-educational nor the sex-segregated classes was there any evidence that the program was better suited to boys than to girls or vice versa.

Some of the more eager students typically read through an entire anthology within a day or two of its being distributed and were disappointed that the anthologies were not longer or that supplements were not available. The boys and girls persistently asked to be allowed to keep their anthologies rather than return them at the end of the unit. Even at the end of the year, some asked again for earlier anthologies. Most of the returned copies were extremely worn, and favorite selections were sometimes torn out. Yet, apart from this special instance of "destructiveness," the materials were not maltreated, but often carefully covered with colored paper, plastic wrap, and the like. The supplementary class library books

(many of them paperbacks) were chronically being lost or "stolen." Often those reported lost were subsequently found in the possession of children not in the Project--friends of the children who were. These library books, too, were worn and used up long before the end of the year. As a matter of fact, one of the weaknesses of planning in this regard (a weakness which has since been corrected) was that the pupils typically "consumed" the class library during the first two or three months of the year, and new additions were not available early enough, a source of complaint on the part of the students.

Even so, it was found that, in general, the lessons planned, the topics outlined for discussion, the supplementary activities suggested, etc., resulted in an over-rich program. Six units were originally planned for the seventh-grade program. It was possible to utilize only four, and these four constitute the present seventh-grade "package."[1] (Of course, occasional lessons were found to be excessively detailed, to involve "milking" a literary selection or a concept for more than it was worth; these were subsequently abbreviated or revised.) There continues to be some disagreement as to the optimal order of the four units, since the twelve different classes were not entirely consistent as to which units they found to be easiest, to go most smoothly, to be most enjoyable. Actually, the units were designed to be independent of each other contentually, to permit flexibility of sequence. However,

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[1] It should be noted here that the average "teaching time" in this pilot program was 36 minutes per class meeting, five sessions per week. Many, if not most, junior high school programs provide longer class periods.

a consensus was reached, and the order now stands as indicated by the arrangement in which the enclosed copies were packaged: (1) A Family Is a Way of Feeling; (2) Stories in Verse; (3) Who Am I; (4) Coping.

There can be no question as to the effectiveness of the program in meeting one of its primary aims--getting the pupils to talk, to discuss what they read, and to fit those ideas into the context of the concerns of their own life situations. They talked freely and animatedly, as reported by their teachers and by many observers who had occasion to visit the classes.[1] It was rarely necessary for the teacher to draw the analogy between the situation involved in one of their reading selections and a real-life situation closer to where they lived, as suggested in the lesson plan. The children's spontaneous response seemed sometimes to suggest that they had been preconched. The performance pattern of one class in particular is a testimonial to the success of the program in this regard. Comprised initially of a group of excessively shy, verbally inhibited children--children with foreign language backgrounds, speech impediments, etc.--this class was described by their teacher at end-year as so verbal that her problem was often one of cutting off discussion without incurring their resentment.

Asked at the end of the year whether they would choose, if free to do so, to be participants in Project English or in a standard seventh-grade English program, the pupils in all

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[1] Note, for example, the commentary--attached to this report--by Tom R. Hopkins, NCTE Task Force.

classes overwhelmingly expressed preference for Project English. They gave as their reason that it was more "fun," that they enjoyed the tape recordings, the poetry readings, the attractive anthologies, the visual aids, the dramatizations and role-playing, and in general, the liveliness of the program; but most especially, they enjoyed the opportunity to discuss and argue things which they perceived as "grown up" concerns. There were a few exceptions. One or two students, at least, felt that it was fun, to be sure, but a lot of "just talk." They felt that they were not doing enough of the really "serious" work being required of other classes taking the regular program. Others expressed concern that they were not being drilled in the "stuff they would need for high school," by which they usually meant traditional grammar.

In point of fact, the teachers were not entirely in disagreement with the pupils in this regard. They found that the course of study, viewed as a year's program as a whole, needed to be tightened up, in the specific sense that the real, tangible work assignments needed to be paced somewhat more systematically. They found that it was indeed possible for some students, while enjoying the discussions and other activities and even contributing meaningfully to them, nonetheless to "goof off" for periods of time, to coast for a while without doing any serious reading. Accordingly, the entire seventh-grade sequence has been reviewed in this light. Specific work assignments have been scheduled more evenly and arrangements have been made for the regular compilation of written compositions, homework assignments, and the like, in a workbook.

In this connection, it might be noted that all teachers

have been found to be unhesitatingly willing to depart from the tried and true, to teach in accordance with the intent and substance of the Gateway curriculum. Nonetheless, they share some continuing concern about the temporary abandonment of direct teaching of traditional grammar. It is not that they doubt that their pupils will learn as much and more about language usage by the Project's "indirect" approach; rather their concern is that at some point their pupils might be penalized for their unfamiliarity with the rules, particularly if this unfamiliarity should be betrayed before the eighth and ninth grade curricula have had a chance to do their work. Meanwhile, however, the children are writing more, are accepting written assignments without resistance, are writing longer compositions in response to the assignment.

With respect to the question of the potentially inhibiting and growth-limiting influence (on the teacher) of a preplanned, highly detailed and structured teaching program, complete with teacher manuals, day-by-day lesson plans, etc. Although it is no doubt possible for such curricula to have a stultifying effect, to encourage dependency and rigidity in teaching, the outcomes of Gateway English have convincingly demonstrated that the effects are not necessarily in that direction, either for the teacher who is, to begin with, lively, imaginative, and inclined toward innovation, or for the teacher who tends to be more conventional and book-bound in her approach. One teacher who perfectly exemplifies the former description nonetheless enthusiastically accepted the invitation to participate in Gateway English, showed unswerving commitment throughout the year to its aims, and in every way

adapted her teaching style to the purposes of the Project. Rather than feeling restricted, she described herself as having been freed to do some of the very things she would want to do if she had completely free reign and if resources were available to her. Observers of her classroom (both Project personnel and outsiders) at intervals throughout the year commented particularly on her vivacity, the sense of excitement she created in her classroom. One observer noted, "(She) conducts the whole show like Bernstein with the Philharmonic." This fall, this same teacher's schedule did not permit her participation in the program. After the first several weeks of school, she visited Project offices to plead for permission to use the materials with her own non-Project class. She finds herself unable to "go back to doing the old stuff I was doing before."

Still another teacher, temperamentally a very different person from the one described above, had the added handicap of not being a teacher of English by training. She was aware of her limitations, had concern about her adequacy to the task, but accepted the challenge. In her case, the materials prevented her from doing a pedestrian job. Had she not had the special materials, she would almost surely have "gone by" some other book, and done a much less effective job. (In point of fact, three of the six Gateway teachers were not teachers of English. They found the lesson plans explicit enough so that they could handle the classes assigned to them. Since, unfortunately, it is a not uncommon practice in schools for disadvantaged children to assign teachers where teachers are needed

and not necessarily in accordance with their primary proficiencies, this is an important consideration.)

In evaluation conferences, the teachers were confronted directly with this question. They indicated that they would welcome more, not less, assistance and made this a direct recommendation for revision of the program. However, they usually meant not that the lesson plans needed to be more detailed, but rather that the teacher needed more background information on the topics, individual authors, etc., introduced in the lessons. They found the students' interest searching as to lead them to ask questions the teacher could not answer. It is suggested, therefore, that the question of whether a good teacher "should be able" to create his own course of study, research his own materials, devise his own unique ways of motivating his class, etc., etc., is largely irrelevant. The fact is that most young, inexperienced teachers cannot do so without assistance, or at least, can do a better job of it with assistance. And it is overwhelmingly the young, inexperienced teachers, or as elsewhere noted, the teachers with irrelevant specialties, who are assigned the most difficult teaching tasks, in schools with children having educational needs not anticipated by the standard teacher-education programs.

Much consideration continues to be given to the question of the appropriateness of dealing with the human relations problems, social issues, and life adjustment concerns which constitute much of the subject matter of Gateway English. However, the best summary of the current status of this question in the thinking of Gateway personnel is that it is an academic

one. That is, the materials have proven to be so successful in accomplishing the "opening up" that was hoped for, have generated so much active participation and involvement in the program on the part of the students, and have shown so much promise as an effective medium for the improvement of language arts skills that they will not be abandoned, regardless of any arguments as to their inappropriateness.

In one class, a discussion touched off by an excerpt from Richard Wright's "Black Boy" and branching off into an intense examination of the civil rights movement, personal integrity, and other issues was identified as the "highlight of the year. I could have spent two full months on it." It was in this same class that these discussions brought about a major change in the inter-personal relationships obtaining in the classroom. Until this time, the discussions had been conducted largely as a spirited dialogue between the teacher and the pupils. But here, the boys and girls really learned from each other. There were a few youngsters who revealed astonishing unawareness of matters which directly concerned them as members of minority groups. Their classmates warmed to the task of repairing their ignorance. A very similar process was described in another class in another school.

Interesting differences were revealed from class to class and between factions within any one class. In one class particularly, there were a number of unusually "militant, argumentative" pupils, whose discussions could easily have gotten out of hand and thereby provided a powerful argument against the use of such material. These pupils seemed to be exploiting the opportunities provided by the course materials simply

as an acceptable springboard to launch their own oratory. However, further exploration of this situation revealed that there were other special factors involved--that this particular class was being inadequately managed by an ineffectual homeroom teacher, and so on.

In any event, it would seem important to reiterate that although the human relations themes appear, on the surface, to dominate the Gateway units, these themes are in fact the vehicle for teaching a wide range of English language arts concepts and skills. A brief inspection of the Teacher's Manual for any one of these units will make this clear. (See, for example, pages iii through v of the Teacher's Manual for A Family Is a Way of Feeling, where the objectives of this unit are stated.)

During the lessons on the Richard Wright selection cited above, children were given instruction in point of view, in the use of verbs and of adverbial and adjectival modifiers in describing "tone" in dialogue, and in the important function of punctuation in written dialogue. Specific instruction in categorizing, generalizing, and qualifying is a major and repeated emphasis in all discussions of reading and preparations for writing.

In this context it is relevant to return to an issue touched on above--the seeming postponement of the teaching of skills in the seventh grade program. The participating teachers commented at the end of the year that they themselves had only gradually become aware that most of the skills they thought should be included were indeed incorporated in the materials. Since they were accustomed to teaching language skills as separate and distinct lessons, the fact that they

were incorporated and unlabelled lowered their visibility. Accordingly, several of these teachers urged that an orientation and training program for Gateway teachers would be helpful generally and would be reassuring with specific reference to the treatment of English language skills. The Gateway staff concur with this recommendation, although they have not had funds to implement it.

This question concerning the appropriateness of "human relations" themes in an English curriculum has led to the consideration of an alternative approach to the use of the materials. In general, it is the conviction of Gateway staff and of its consultants that these materials, no less than any other course of study in English language, are best taught by a trained teacher of English, not by a social studies teacher, business arithmetic teacher, or other specialist, however worthy and gifted. The unusual content of the materials in no way alters the fact that they are designed as a program in language arts. And indeed, it developed that the teachers of English generally fared better than did the non-teachers-of-English. However, in the management of some lessons, the social studies teacher had a distinct advantage, since she very candidly drew upon her social studies knowledge to fill out the background of the literary questions the pupils were studying. Accordingly, it has been suggested that some portions of the curriculum, by plan, be dovetailed with the social studies units scheduled for the same year, and that a cooperative teaching arrangment be worked out with the social studies departments in the schools. To the extent feasible, this plan is being followed in the eighth grade program currently being piloted.

In further consideration of this question of course content, parent reactions might be an important factor. However, it is an unhappy fact that one of the characteristics of the school population for whom this program is designed is a relative lack of parent involvement in school matters. Accordingly, the sampling of parent reactions obtained were too fragmentary to permit any firm conclusions. Those that were given were largely favorable. Approving comments were heard with specific reference to the choice of literary selections either written by prominent Negroes or dealing with Negroes in a way which reflected their dignity as a people, the contributions which they have made, as Negroes, to the American scene, etc. One Negro parent, on the other hand, objected to the "Black Boy" selections, expressing the fear that such selections would serve no constructive purpose but might only "instigate" the children to form rebellious ideas and indulge in unacceptable behavior.

It is perhaps remarkable that these materials could have been tried out for a full year, as they have been, without having given rise to a single troublesome community episode. They were piloted in three different schools in different sections of a city very much in turmoil over such issues as de facto school segregation. Interested citizens of New York City are hardly unanimous in their views as to how the guarantee of equal rights is best to be effected. There are, for example, those who would object to the use of what might be classified as "ethnic literature" or to the adoption of any "special curriculum" for any group of children, on the grounds that such an approach is <u>ipso facto</u> discriminatory. Apparently, the

immediate and long-range goals of the Gateway project have been so clearly presented that no suspicion about its motives remains.

Although two of the three cooperating schools had predominantly Negro and Puerto Rican populations, the third school had a population, reflected in the Gateway experimental classes, that was fairly evenly distributed among Negro, Puerto Rican, and "other" children. Gateway materials according to the cooperating teachers seemed, with only one or two exceptions, equally interesting to all these children. This observation tends to confirm the belief of the Gateway staff that it is possible to develop curriculum materials which include topics and contributions of special interest to minority groups which will also be appealing to other children.

The final results of Gateway English are not yet in. The eighth and ninth grade programs have yet to be piloted. However, the findings based on seventh-grade outcomes are so convincing as to leave no doubt that the program meets the needs of the students and teachers it was designed to serve.

APPENDIX A

H U N T E R C O L L E G E
of the City of New York
695 Park Avenue
New York 21, N.Y.

Department of Education

September 23, 1965

Professor Marjorie B. Smiley
Director of Gateway English
Hunter College

Dear Marjorie,

As you requested, I am summarizing here the circumstances which led to the recommendation that plans for formal evaluation of Project English be discontinued. As you know, I have stubbornly resisted conceding that difficulties encountered in adhering to an acceptable evaluation design were great enough to warrant such a step and, instead, have urged that we persist, despite the impossibility of realizing a "clean" plan. You also know that the recommendation is as much an expression of the judgment of the director of the Hunter College Office of Institutional Research as of mine.

Every member of Project English staff is aware of the complexities involved in attempting systematic curriculum research within the framework and functioning of a large and complicated school system. Each of us is prepared to make concessions to the realities of school life and to accept, however regretfully, the most approximate standards of experimental design purity. However, when even the "experimental" classes within the same school fail to meet any standard of pre-experimental comparability, then the evaluation effort ceases to offer any hope of valid and reportable findings.

For several months prior to the closing of schools in June--with the cooperation of Board of Education personnel, of various persons on the staff here at Hunter, of professional research people in other institutions in the city, and of course, of many individuals on the staffs of the junior high schools involved--we were engaged in an effort to locate "control" classes which compared in certain fundamental ways with our experimental 7th grade classes. Obviously, to accomplish this, we needed to have reasonably definite information as to the characteristics of our experimental classes. Some of these characteristics were to be accepted as they were found to be after relevant data were obtained. Some of these characteristics were dictated by Project English as a condition of the participation of the classes in the experimental program.

For example, it was agreed that Project English classes would not simultaneously be involved in the "intensive reading" program being inaugurated in the schools, not only to avoid contamination of the Project English effect with the Intensive

Reading effect, but because in general, the "Intensive Reading" classes were supposed to represent a somewhat more severe degree of language arts retardation than Project English classes. Classes participating in Project English must not vary unsystematically in having five, six, seven, or eight periods per week of language arts instruction. Experimental teachers must not in some instances have thorough prior familiarity with the materials and in other instances be strangers to the Project. One experimental teacher must not operate "solo" while every other experimental teacher systematically had a "buddy."

(Obviously, many such variables might well be introduced into the study by plan. Assessment of the contributory effect, if any, of these "secondary" factors on the outcomes might yield highly interesting and useful information about the value of the experimental curriculum. However, this would be feasible only with a sufficiently large total number of classes to permit this kind of multi-variate analysis in a planned and systematic fashion. With only twelve such experimental classes all told, and the operational unfeasibility of locating just such classes as the design demanded in a school system over whose programming and class composition we had virtually no influence, focus had to be restricted to the main variables under study, with contaminating variables excluded as much as possible.)

Anyone familiar with the New York City public schools is aware that administrative and guidance personnel in the junior high schools were handicapped by unusual difficulties and obstacles in planning programs for this fall. Staff at Board of Education headquarters were similarly unable to provide essential information needed in making programming decisions. Until almost the closing of school for summer recess, program planners did not know for certain whether they were indeed losing their ninth grades and gaining sixth grades; whether they were going to lose so many students through "open enrollment" procedures as to result in reduction in the total number of classes and of teachers they could plan on; whether their total enrollment might in fact be so drastically reduced as to warrant last-minute closing down of an Annex (which in this instance would automatically lead to termination of a sex-segregated arrangement and the inauguration of a co-educational program), etc., etc. In most instances, schools closed with classes only very loosely and tentatively organized and the teacher programs not settled at all.

Notwithstanding the above, we persisted. We insisted upon having, however tentative, the latest available class groupings and collected basic data on these classes, on the assumption that their composition would not change too drastically over the summer. We secured the agreement of "control" schools to permit testing in the fall, examined <u>their</u> all-but-final class groupings and selected classes on the basis of comparability to the all-but-final class groupings of the experimental schools. As a safeguard, we selected an excess of control classes in order to improve our chances of ending up with a fairly close control class for each experimental class.

During the summer, we proceeded to order standardized tests, to devise and duplicate our own original evaluation instruments, and so on.

This week, with recruitment of testers almost completed and with a testing schedule in process of being organized, we discovered that nothing was as it was planned in June. Far beyond expected changes in class composition, we learned that in many instances the entire class organization job had been reworked, sometimes apparently by persons entirely unaware of the commitments made to Project English as to certain scheduling restrictions.

Thus, in one experimental school, we found both teachers to be those with prior familiarity with the materials, although it had been decided that all seventh-grade teachers would be new to the Project. The best adjustment we could obtain in that situation was to the extent of 50%, resulting in the elimination of 2 classes from the experimental program--a serious reduction in the original N of 12 classes--and introducing the condition of one teacher working without a buddy. By September 22, school had virtually not begun for some children who were still waiting for their permanent class assignments. In one of the experimental schools, participating pupils were provided with varying numbers of additioral "corrective reading" instruction, with the further complication that in some instances these additional hours were to be taught by their "own" l.a. teacher (the Project English teacher) and in some instances by another member of the school staff. In another school, we discovered by routine inspection of teachers' schedules that a different class had been substituted for one of the four selected in June; in this same school, the four classes had respectively no, one, two, and three additional periods of corrective or "intensive" reading instruction, in conjunction with another curriculum project being tried out in the junior high schools.

This same unsystematic variation of crucial conditions appears to obtain in the eighth-grade pilot program, and the same general situation in the schools from which the 7th-grade control classes were selected. In telephoning to arrange testing appointments, one of our staff found a similar state of incompleteness with respect to scheduling of students and classes.

Manifestly, if we were to persist in our plan to test experimental and control classes, and if we were to find any palpable difference between the groups in growth in reading or reading-allied skills, we would have absolutely no basis for interpreting such a finding.

Those of us concerned have agreed that further expenditure of staff time, and of project financial resources in this effort cannot be justified. It would seem preferable to utilize these resources in the development of the materials and in other ancillary aims of the project. Formal evaluation of the project is being incorporated into the plans of other

school systems who have asked to pilot the curriculum and where acceptable research design principles can be observed. Here in New York, evaluation plans will be restricted to the exploration of certain "qualitative" implications of the curriculum involving assessment of teacher judgments and samples of pupil reactions.

Very sincerely,

Marguerite M. Wilke
Assistant Professor of Education

MMW:evk

APPENDIX B

GATEWAY ENGLISH

NAME_____ DATE_____

SCHOOL_____ CLASS_____

BOY_____ GIRL_____ IDENTIFICATION NO. _____

IDENTIFICATION NO. _____

PLEASE DO NOT TURN THE PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE GIVEN THE SIGNAL TO BEGIN.

When you lift up this page, you will see a picture. You are to write a story about it.

Look carefully at the picture. In your story, you are to tell what happened before--
what led up to the things that are happening in the picture. Then tell what is going on in the picture,
how the people in the picture are feeling, what they are thinking, and what they are saying.
Then tell how it all turns out.

Before writing your story, you should plan what you want to say and the order in which
you want to say it. You may use page number two for making notes about your plans. As soon as
you have finished planning, you shoud begin to write. You will have about half an hour.

Try to write neatly. Save a little time at the end to check your paper and make any necessary
changes. Since there will not be time to copy what you write, make your changes neatly by writing
between the lines. The lines have been widely spaced to make this possible.

Do the best you can.

PRECEDING PAGE BLANK-NOT FILMED

MRS. ALLGOOD MR. HARVEY BOBBY

MRS. ALLGOOD MR. HARVEY BOBBY

Writing a story about a picture like this one is: (check one)

_____easy and fun to do.

_____ easy, but boring.

_____not easy, but not too hard.

_____too hard and not very interesting.

_____quite hard, but interesting.

DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING

LISTENING TEST

FIRST: Print your name as plainly as you can on the line at the top of your answer sheet, where it says "Name."
Then, fill in the other blanks, where it asks for your age, whether you are a boy or a girl, and so on.

Today's date is_____. (Examiner writes date on board)
This school is_____. (Examiner writes JHS # on board)
This class is_____. (Examiner writes class no. on board)
Your teacher's name is spelled_____. (Examiner writes name of language arts teacher on board)

This is a test to see how well you can understand the kinds of things that are spoken aloud to you. First listen carefully to what you are to do. Then you may ask questions about any part of the directions you do not understand.

I am going to read some short selections aloud to you. Sometimes I will leave out a word or phrase. When that happens, I will pause, and then I will say the word "Blank" instead of reading the word or phrase that belongs there. For each blank, you must decide which of four words or phrases is best. You will find the four possible choices for each blank on your answer sheet, and they will also be read aloud to you. Decide on the best one. Then, fill in the space--A, B, C, or D--that goes with the word or phrase that you have chosen.

Sometimes there will be no missing words or phrases. Instead, I will read the whole selection aloud, and then I will ask you questions about it. For each question, you will find four possible answers on your answer sheet, and they will also be read aloud to you. Blacken in the space--A, B, C, or D--that goes with the answer you have chosen for that question.

Now, let's try a Sample, to make sure we all understand what we are to do.

Sample: The singing birds entertain us. We like to __blank__ their songs.

A...touch B...feel C...hear D...see

The correct answer is C...hear. We like to hear their songs. Blacken in the space--C--that goes with the word "hear" in the box marked Sample at the top of your answer sheet. (Examiner points.) Everybody do this now. (Proctors check papers in the room to make sure directions have been followed.)

Are there any questions? (Examiner answers any questions on procedure.)

Remember that you must listen carefully. Each selection and each question will be read aloud only ONCE. I cannot repeat. Only the possible answers are printed on your answer sheet, so that you can look at them while you are choosing your answer.

Now, LISTEN CAREFULLY to the first selection, so that you will be able to choose the best answer for the word I leave out.

1. The song was difficult, but Betty was able to __blank____ it easily.

   A...sing B...sell C...read D...write

   Fill in space A, B, C, or D for Question 1.

---

2. The enemy guards were not watching. Bob decided that this was the time to __blank____.

   A...escape B...capture C...join D...sleep

(3) Unfortunately, before he had gone very far, he was __blank____.

   A...gone B...caught C...free D...away

The next question will be Number 4.

4. Ken lived in a small village near a good harbor. Sometimes big boats came to the __blank____ to be safe from a storm.

   A...village B...river C...harbor D...shore

---

5. Although the girls were not related, their resemblance was striking. Even their voices sounded __blank____.

   A...different B...alike C...high D...sharp

---

6. The equator is the name given to the imaginary line passing around the middle of the earth. Of course, there is no real __blank__ except as shown on maps and globes.

   A...middle B...line C...earth D...name

---

7. Camels are found in parts of Asia and in the Sahara Desert in Africa. There are two kinds of camels; one kind has one hump while the other has two. The camel found in the Sahara Desert, or African camel, has one hump and is called a dromedary. The Asian camel is larger than the _____

   A...camel B...horse C...dromedary D...elephant

(8) and has two __blank____.

   A...humps B...pouches C...jaws D...tusks

(9) Some camels are used as pack animals and carry heavy __blank____, while others are used for riding or racing.

   A...coats B...horns C...loads D...humps

The next question will be Number 10.

10. Running with the football past two tackles and jumping over a third player, Jim almost reached the ___blank___

A...football B...goal line C...coach D...tackle

(11) before he was ___blank___.

A...honored B...promoted C...stopped D...fired

The next question will be Number 12.

12. Larry is usually prompt, but Saturday he was ___blank___ practice.

A...late for B...on time for C...absent from D...present at

---

13. Beth has many dolls. However, the one she likes best is the little ___blank___ her mother made for her.

A...dress B...doll C...toy D...kitten

---

14. If there is a steady wind which usually blows from one direction, that wind may bend a tree; or if a tree grows in a place, such as near a wall, where the light strikes its sides unequally, it may grow crooked. But a tree usually grows ___blank___, because that is the best way for it to grow, and because everything generally helps it to do so.

A...fast B...full C...straight D...at an angle

(15) Also, a tree throws out branches about equally on all sides so that their weight all around helps to ___blank___ it and keep it straight.

A...tilt B...loosen C...retard D...balance

The next question will be number 16.

16. The Olympic Games, named after Olympia, the town in Greece where they were first held, were started to entertain the dwellers on Olympus. These most important of all the ancient ___blank___ were held every four years and lasted five days.

A...games B...sacrifices C...wars D...towns

(17) An enclosed plain was dedicated to them, and they were eagerly attended, not only by the ___blank___, but also by men from other lands far and near.

A...Romans B...spectators C...contestants D...Greeks

The next question will be Number 18.

18. Although quite large, tortoises do not equal the size of turtles, which, keeping entirely to the sea for a living, have grown ___blank___ in the midst of unfailing plenty.

A...to great size B...slowly C...poorly D...to equal size

(19) Since the forelimbs of turtles, as is true of sea mammals, have been coverted into paddles, they are good ___blank___.

A...flyers B...runners C...sleepers D...swimmers

(20) They leave the ___blank___ only when the time comes for them to lay their eggs.

A...paddles B...land C...water D...group

The next question will be number 21.

21. The pitch of a musical tone is determined by the rate at which an object vibrates. The more rapid the vibration, the higher the ___blank___.

A...pitch B...temperature C...wave D...vibration

(22) Many tones really consist of more than one pitch, although it is possible to have a ___blank___ of a single pitch

A...light B...color C...tone D...octave

(23) A tuning fork produces such a tone, but a violin or piano string or a human voice produces a tone made up of different ___blank___.

A...colors B...pitches C...instruments D...voices

The next question will be number 24.

24. Seldom has a country been more inappropriately named than Greenland. Except for a narrow strip around its southern coast, it is a land buried under a cap of ___blank___ which never goes away.

A...ice B...soil C...tundra D...trees

(25) Greenland might better have been called ___blank___.

A...Treeland B...Vineland C...Parkland D...Iceland

The next question will be Number 26.

26. Nan and Jean are very different in appearance. Nan is rather pretty; Jean is _____blank_____.

A...fat B...not C...tall D...also

(27) While Jean is quite untidy, Nan is _____blank_____.

A...too B...thin C...short D...neat

The next question will be Number 28.

28. Monkeys, dogs, birds, and other animals besides man are able to learn things, but man is the only living creature capable of learning a language, or reading _____blank_____.

A...sounds B...danger C...a book D...tracks

(29) of building a _____blank_____, and of constructing a hydrogen bomb.

A...dam B...machine C...family D...boat

(30) In view of the last achievement, it is interesting to note that _____blank_____ are the only animals known to utilize mass destruction of others of their own kind.

A...apes B...vultures C...lions D...men

I

Now listen carefully while/read this paragraph all the way through, so that you will be able to answer questions about it.

Herman Melville, who was born in 1819 in New York, of a much respected family, was of an adventurous nature. He spent years at sea, and was captured and imprisoned for four months by cannibals of the Marquesas Islands. His experiences here he put into a tale entitled Typee. Its success led him to write a second tale of the Pacific, Omoo, and later Moby Dick, one of the most powerful books ever written about the sea. Moby Dick was published in 1851, and its fame has grown steadily ever since.

The next question will be number 31.

31. According to the paragraph just read, Melville was imprisoned on the _____blank_____.

A...Marquesas Islands B...Omoo Islands C...Typee Islands D...Moby Dick

32. Melville wrote one of his books after an imprisonment of _____blank_____.

A...two months B...four months C...six months D...three months

33. How did Melville die?

A...killed by cannibals B...killed by a whale C...the passage doesn't say D...drowned at sea

34. What is apparently Melville's most famous book?

A...Omoo B...Moby Dick C...Typee D...none of these

35. In what book did Melville write of his experiences with cannibals?

A...Moby Dick B...Omoo C...The passage doesn't say D...Typee

The next question will be Number 36.

36. Egypt is in northeastern Africa. Greece is in southeastern Europe. But since Africa is south of Europe, Greece is ___BLANK___ of Egypt.

A...north B...east C....south D...west

The next question will be Number 37.

37. Steam is water in the form of gas. It is colorless, almost invisible, and elastic. Like all other gases, its elasticity causes it to ___blank___ until it fills any container in which it is confined.

A...react B...decrease C...expand D...evaporate

---

38. For many centuries Hebrew, Latin, and Sanskrit were "dead" languages. That is, they were not ___blank___ by people in daily life.

A...spoken B...sung C...dream D...heard of

(39) Their only use was in religious services. Today, however, with Israel emerging as a Jewish state, Hebrew is again becoming a living tongue. ___Blank___ and Latin, however, will probably never be revived.

A...Latin B...Sanskrit C...Hebrew D...Israel

The next question will be number 40.

40. The first powered flight by man occurred at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, on December 17, 1903. Wilbur and Orville Wright, two brothers, were able to achieve only a short 120-foot ___blank___;

A...wing B...flight C...field D...landing

(41) but this event marked the beginning of the era of ___Blank___.

A...transportation B...North Carolina C...aviation D...the Wrights

---

The next question will be Number 42.

42. Water passes easily through soil and sand, and we therefore say that soil and sand are porous. Water does not seep through glass, and we therefore say that glass is nonporous. A porous material such as cloth is quite useful in straining impurities from _____blank_____.

A...solids B...sand and soil C...glass D...liquids

---

43. Weather in the United States is tremendously influenced by air masses coming from Canada and the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf, for example, has warm and moist air over it, and this mass of air is the primary cause of the warm, damp _____blank_____ of the Gulf States.

A...rain B...soil C...clouds D...climate

Last question, Number 44. Listen Carefully.

44. The great effect which Donatello's work had on his own and succeeding generations was that of making sculptors and painters ashamed of any affectation. He tried to make his statues as lifelike and natural as possible, and was the first _____blank_____ of Italy to have such an ideal.

A...sculptor B...writer C...nun D...architect.

Name _____ Age _____ Sex _____ Date _____

School _____ Grade _____ Class _____ Teacher _____

J.C.-1 MAKE YOUR MARKS HEAVY AND BLACK--ERASE COMPLETELY ANY ANSWERS YOU WISH TO CHANGE

LISTENING TEST

Sample
A -touch
B -feel
C -hear
D -see

1 A -sing
B -sell
C -read
D -write

2 A -escape
B -capture
C -join
D -sleep

3 A -gone
B -caught
C -free
D -away

4 A -village
B -river
C -harbor
D -shore

5 A -different
B -alike
C -high
D -sharp

6 A -middle
B -line
C -earth
D -name

7 A -camel
B -horse
C -dromedary
D -elephant

8 A -humps
B -pouches
C -jaws
D -tusks

9 A -coats
B -horns
C -loads
D -humps

10 A -football
B -goal line
C -coach
D -tackle

11 A -honored
B -promoted
C -stopped
D -fired

12 A -late for
B -on time for
C -absent from
D -present at

13 A -dress
B -doll
C -toy
D -kitten

14 A -fast
B -full
C -straight
D -at an angle

15 A -tilt
B -loosen
C -retard
D -balance

16 A -games
B -sacrifices
C -wars
D -towns

17 A -Romans
B -spectators
C -contestants
D -Greeks

18 A -to great size
B -slowly
C -poorly
D -to equal size

19 A -flyers
B -runners
C -sleepers
D -swimmers

20 A -paddles
B -land
C -water
D -group

21 A -pitch
B -temperature
C -wave
D -vibration

22 A -light
B -color
C -tone
D -octave

23 A -colors
B -pitches
C -instruments
D -voices

24 A -ice
B -soil
C -tundra
D -trees

25 A -Treeland
B -Vineland
C -Darkland
D -Iceland

26 A -fat
B -not
C -tall
D -also

27 A -too
B -thin
C -short
D -neat

28 A -sounds
B -danger
C -a book
D -tracks

29 A -dam
B -machine
C -family
D -nest

30 A -apes
B -vultures
C -lions
D -men

31 A -Marquesas Islands
B -Onoo Islands
C -Typee Islands
D -Moby Dick

32 A -two months
B -four months
C -six months
D -three months

33 A -killed by cannibals
B -killed by a whale
C -the passage doesn't say
D -drowned at sea

34 A -Onoo
B -Moby Dick
C -Typee
D -none of these

35 A -Moby Dick
B -Onoo
C -the passage doesn't say
D -Typee

36 A -north
B -east
C -south
D -west

37 A -react
B -decrease
C -expand
D -evaporate

38 A -spoken
B -sung
C -drawn
D -heard of

39 A -Latin
B -Sanskrit
C -Hebrew
D -Israel

40 A -wing
B -flight
C -field
D -landing

41 A -transportation
B -North Carolina
C -aviation
D -the Wrights

42 A -solids
B -sand and soil
C -glass
D -liquids

43 A -rain
B -soil
C -clouds
D -climate

44 A -sculptor
B -writer
C -man
D -architect

APPENDIX C

Comment on a Visit to a Gateway English Experimental Class

May 5, 1965 -- Prepared for NCTE Task Force on Education for the Disadvantaged

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Student Population

The students were mostly Negro. One class was totally Negro, and two were mostly Negro with about three or four non-Negroes per class. Their speech habits varied but, on the whole, they weren't poor speakers of English. This would be the case for the better students have apparently been selected for participation in the program. (It was understood that students or classes selected for participation were determined by the administration of the school.)

Students attitudes appeared to be excellent and far above average. They were really interested in what they were reading and discussing. They, so the teacher told me, make praising comments about the project, and only complain about the lack of traditional grammar.

Student attitudes toward the administration were not determined. There was no chance to talk with students and to venture an answer to this item would be too much a guess.

Content for the Gateway English Project could perhaps be divided into two areas: (1) "cognitive" and (2) skills.

1. Cognitive - Generally speaking, it could be said that Gateway English is primarily interested in assisting the student to develop a suitable "cognitive orientation in a cosmos," to borrow an anthropological term. Cognitive orientation means that the individual sees the world in his own way and that it has "order" and "reason" rather than chaos. Too many times, so

we are told, the culturally deprived individual has difficulty making order and reason a part of his world and, therefore, chaos is a factor in his cognitive orientation. In my opinion, Gateway English tries to meet and deal with this basic problem of the culturally disadvantaged child. The project is an attempt to provide the culturally deprived student with intellectual material which deals with the basic elements of a modern cognitive orientation including morality, ethics, logic, customs, etc.

It is necessary to assist, via the school, the culturally deprived to develop a suitable cognitive orientation for his home life does not provide for him the necessary factors which would make for a healthy modern world-view. It is more or less assumed that the middle-class student has developed for him in the home the type of cognitive orientation that is more in keeping with the modern world. Since this assumption cannot, or should not be made for the culturally deprived, Gateway English is trying to assist the student in making a satisfactory and successful adjustment to the modern world.

To do this the general approach is literary, meaning that literature is the basis for the program. The content of the literature is selected for its relationship to the problems of the students. Therefore, the basic organizational pattern is that of the unit and each unit is assigned a theme to which all literature selected for study is related. This in itself is not a new approach, but the newness is that the material selected has direct relationship to the problems of the students for which it was developed. Mainly the culturally disadvantaged child. There are other English materials developed in this

manner but these are the first for the culturally disadvantaged.

Some of the themes chosen are "Who Am I?" and "Coping." Taking these two as examples it can be seen that one basic objective is to help the students be introspective and to teach them to ask the right questions regarding problems of modern living. In this case, problems related directly to their situation. To refer back to my first paragraph of this section, the title of the theme suggests that the project is aiming at developing in the student a "logical" approach to problem solving, logical as it is percieved by the Anglo-western culture and the greater society of the United States and as it is reflected by the English language.

The units are developed around an anthology which has been prepared by Hunter College. The anthology has stories and essays which have content related to the theme of the unit. Supporting the anthologies are paperback classroom libraries. The titles of the paperback libraries are related to the themes of the units and have settings and content which are pertinent to the lives of the culturally deprived and the objectives of Gateway English.

2. The skills taught are woven within the general framework of the units. Composition, and speaking (rhetoric), are dealt with in a very intensive manner. The material being pertinent to the lives of the students, sparks lively interest and increases motivation. Having good motivation, the classes likewise have a great deal of language activity, either verbal or in writing. With this great language activity being generated teachers have a chance to teach English for what it is, a language for communication of ideas and feelings.

Composition skills, according to the teachers, have improved remarkably since the program started last September. Students write longer compositions without the teacher having to use authoritarian measures to get student cooperation. In this case composition has a positive attitude associated with it.

Reading is also improving because the materials the students read are interesting to them. The general reading scores have improved and more important than this is the development of the desire to read. The program works as much on developing a desire to read as it does anything else. Like composition and speaking, once language activity is started the teacher can make corrective suggestions.

Speech is usually in the form of a dialogue between teacher and students. This was seen in one class to a very high degree, but considering the other class was just beginning the study of the unit, there wasn't much dialogue. Nonetheless, the program has written in its structure this form of speech training. Again, if the materials read and studied are interesting to the students, and language activity can be generated, then direction (teaching) is enhanced.

Comments

The administrators found it difficult to separate the various aspects of the program and comment on them individually. They generally referred to the program as a whole entity and said that it was excellent. Their praise was great. They stated that the program should have wider use than it now receives.

The one weakness, if indeed it can be called a weakness, was expressed by a teacher. The program contains no direct teaching of English grammar. This means that the students won't be able to compete in this school exercise later in their school careers when it is taught in high school and is included on standardized tests of all types. The teacher admitted that the students wrote better and continued to improve in spite of the absence of traditional grammar. Yet, it appeared they were going to be penalized for not knowing this subject, even if it does seem that grammar, as it is usually taught in English classes has little relationship to the language as it is spoken.